



# Personalising learning – 6

The final gateway: school design and organisation

David Hargreaves

March 2006



## **Personalising learning – 6**

The final gateway: school design and organisation

*A joint publication with the Association of School and College Leaders  
(formerly Secondary Heads Association)*

### **Author**

David H Hargreaves, Associate Director for Development and Research, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust; and Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge. He has been Professor of Education in the University of Cambridge, Chief Inspector of the Inner London Education Authority, Chief Executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and Chairman of the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency.

### **Editor**

Peter Chambers

### **Mission**

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust works to give practical support to the transformation of secondary education in England by building and enabling a world-class network of innovative, high performing secondary schools in partnership with business and the wider community.

## **This publication**

### **Audience**

Teachers and leaders at all levels in education.

### **Aim**

To show how the final gateway to personalising learning – school design and organisation – brings together the other eight gateways; and to set out an approach to the challenges for school transformation.

## **© Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, 2006**

Abstracting is permitted with acknowledgement to the source. For other copying or general enquiries contact:

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, 16th Floor, Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London SW1P 4QP

Tel: 020 7802 2300 Fax: 020 7802 2345 Email: [info@ssatrust.org.uk](mailto:info@ssatrust.org.uk)

Websites: [www.ssat-inet.net](http://www.ssat-inet.net) [www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk](http://www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk)

Charity no. 296729 Registered in England. Company no. 2124695

Printed by Dexter Graphics, 3-5 Sandpit Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5BU

ISBN 1-905150-33-4

# Contents

- 2 Preface
- 5 Chapter 1  
**Introduction**
- 8 Chapter 2  
**A diversity of schools**
- 15 Chapter 3  
**A new view of the learner**
- 23 Chapter 4  
**Deep support through collaboration between schools**
- 31 Chapter 5  
**Reconfiguring secondary education**
- 45 Chapter 6  
**The 21st century educational imaginary**
- 55 References, sources and suggestions

## Preface

In the first pamphlet in this series, **Personalising Learning – next steps in working laterally** (October 2004), David Hargreaves argued that

- personalising learning is realised through nine interconnected gateways
- personalisation needs to be treated as a pathway to educational transformation
- a radically different system of innovation and development and research for education is needed.

Since then, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) and the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) – formerly Secondary Heads Association – have together organised a series of conferences focusing on the gateways. The events have given schools the opportunity to discuss their journey of personalising learning for all students of all abilities. We have been able to share these case studies through the series of pamphlets that David Hargreaves has written. We now have the last pamphlet in the series, **School design and organisation**, in which the author describes the remarkable work that headteachers and schools are doing in transforming their schools.

The pamphlet examines our new conception of the learner and the six core themes that emerge from the schools' presentations. David Hargreaves identifies the sequence of steps needed to enable students to be co-constructors in their education. It is evident that many teachers and school leaders will find this new view of the learner challenging. It is equally clear that if secondary education is to be transformed students must have a responsible voice and be equal partners in their learning journey.

During our journey, the power of each gateway and the interconnections became clearer. At the last conference, David put the gateways into four groups:

Deep learning – this can be realised by focussing on assessment for learning, learning to learn and student voice. It engages and gives responsibility to students for their learning.

Deep experience – crucial to engagement with learning is the curriculum, and the new technologies enable students to explore and enhance their learning experience. Students are moving to greater independence and confidence in learning.

Deep support – needed to enable students to move towards co-construction and greater engagement. Advice & guidance and mentoring & coaching are key components of deep support.

Deep leadership – to achieve a personalised learning experience for all children, we require leaders who are prepared to look radically at the nature of schooling and to abandon old structures. No school has achieved personalisation; a number of schools are advanced in a number of gateways.

All of the gateways require leadership, but school design and organisation is the preserve of the school leader. The final conference was centred on the ideas of experienced, innovative headteachers from a range of schools and contexts. Their reflections were insightful, realistic and challenging.

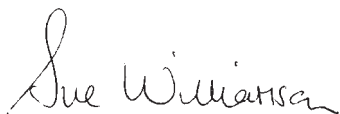
The pamphlet concludes with David Hargreaves explaining the 21st century educational imaginary that has evolved from exploring the nine gateways. Undoubtedly, there will be much debate about his analysis. It should be remembered that his interpretation is based on the work of practitioners in schools today. The emphasis is moving away from teaching to learning, recognising that the world of the 21st century is radically different.

The profession has embraced personalising learning with a passion and conviction seldom seen. Our emerging ambition is the 21st century educational imaginary; the vehicle is personalising learning; and the route is the nine gateways. The strategy is:

### The final gateway: school design and organisation

- lateral transfer of good practice
- next practice through development and research networks
- teacher-led, school-based
- no top down, quick-fix solutions.

I have no doubt that it is in our grasp to transform secondary education. The next steps in our journey should help make this ambition a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sue Williamson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sue Williamson, Director of Leadership and Affiliation,  
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust  
January, 2006

# Chapter 1 Introduction

This pamphlet reflects the presentations and discussions at the conferences in January 2006 by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and the Association of School and College Leaders on the final gateway of personalising learning: the design and organisation of the school. Thanks are due to the school leaders who contributed to the film (available as a DVD) that formed the stimulus for the day's activities, and from whose contributions many of the quotations in later chapters are taken:

- Alison Banks, principal, Westminster Academy
- Jackie Beere, headteacher, Campion School and Language College
- Mark Davies, headteacher, Dene Magna Community School
- Tony Downing, headteacher, Caroline Chisholm School
- Cheryl Heron, headteacher, Bridgemary Community School
- John King, headteacher, Gable Hall School
- Paul Mortimer, CEO, governing body, Hollingworth High School
- Alex Reed, deputy headteacher, Greenford High School
- Paul Roberts, headteacher, Eaton Bank School
- Jan Robertson, associate professor, University of Waikato, New Zealand
- Andy Schofield, headteacher, Varndean School
- David Triggs, headteacher, Greensward College
- Derek Wise, headteacher, Cramlington Community High School

Thanks are also due to Kai Vacher, the head of personalising learning, Emma Sims, development and research co-ordinator, and other colleagues who helped in the conduct of the conferences. I am especially grateful to Sue Williamson, director of affiliation and leadership, for her support and advice throughout the series of five conferences and the preparation of the six pamphlets.

Personalised learning was defined by David Miliband when he was DfES Minister for Schools: 'Personalised learning demands that every aspect of teaching and support is designed around a pupil's needs...' In this programme of conferences and publications the term personalised learning is replaced by personalising learning, as the latter implies a professional process or journey rather than simply a product to be delivered.

Teachers have always sought to do this, though they know that they do not in practice succeed in meeting every need of every student. So the injunction from ministers amounts to a plea to make any changes to current practice that will allow teachers to meet more of the needs of more students more fully than ever before.

In this series of six pamphlets, personalising learning is approached through nine gateways. The first pamphlet, **Personalising learning: next steps in working laterally** set the general context and outlined the gateways and the sequence of conferences and pamphlets, as follows:

- Student voice **and** assessment for learning (reported in the second pamphlet)
- Learning to learn **and** the new technologies (reported in the third pamphlet)
- Curriculum **and** advice & guidance (reported in the fourth pamphlet)
- Mentoring & coaching **and** workforce development (reported in the fifth pamphlet).

The subject of this final pamphlet is the last gateway, the design and organisation of the school. It brings together all the previous eight gateways and sets four questions:

- How do the gateways interact and interlock so that a school can claim that it has personalised learning for students in a way that is consistent and coherent?
- How does the design of the school (and not just the bricks and mortar aspects) need to change to accomplish this, and what new forms of organisation are emerging?
- What kinds of leadership do these tasks demand?
- How much clearer are we now about the nature of the gateways and their relationship to the transformation that was envisaged in the first pamphlet, **Personalising learning: next steps in working laterally** (October 2004)?



Specialist Schools  
and Academies Trust  
EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY

Members of iNet can download the  
full publication from  
[www.ssat-inet.net/library.aspx](http://www.ssat-inet.net/library.aspx)

For information about joining iNet  
visit  
[www.ssat-inet.net/joininet.aspx](http://www.ssat-inet.net/joininet.aspx)

To buy the publication visit  
<https://secure.ssatrust.org.uk/eshop>